



COVID-19

Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine

Updated Feb. 14, 2022

Find a Vaccine

Vaccines are widely available. In many cases, you do not need an appointment.

- The federal government is providing the vaccine **free of charge** to everyone ages 5 years of age and older living in the United States, regardless of their immigration or health insurance status.
- Most people in the United States live within 5 miles of a COVID-19 vaccine location.

Find a COVID-19 vaccine or booster: Search [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov), text your ZIP code to 438829, or call 1-800-232-0233 to find locations near you.

Get Vaccinated Even If You Had COVID-19 and Think You Have Natural Immunity

You should get a COVID-19 vaccine even if you already had COVID-19. No currently available test can reliably determine if you are protected after a COVID-19 infection.

Getting a COVID-19 vaccine after you recover from COVID-19 infection provides added protection to your immune system. People who already had COVID-19 and do not get vaccinated after their recovery are more likely to get COVID-19 again than those who get vaccinated after their recovery.



Routine Medical Procedures and Screenings

Most routine medical procedures and screenings can be performed before or after COVID-19 vaccination. However, if you are due for a mammogram, ask your doctor about when you should get one. Some experts recommend getting your mammogram before being vaccinated or waiting four to six weeks after getting your vaccine. People who have received a COVID-19 vaccine can have swelling in the lymph nodes (lymphadenopathy) in the underarm near where they got the shot. This is more common after booster or additional doses than after the primary vaccination series. It is possible that this swelling could cause a false reading on a mammogram.

Talk to your doctor if you have any questions or concerns about getting vaccinated before or after any routine medical procedures or screenings.

At the Vaccination Site

Before you arrive, contact the site where you will be vaccinated or review your appointment confirmation email for details about your vaccination appointment.

- When getting a vaccine, you or your child *and* your healthcare provider will need to wear masks that cover your nose and mouth. Stay 6 feet away from others while inside and in lines. Learn more about [protecting yourself when going to get your COVID-19 vaccine](#).
- You should receive a paper or electronic version of a fact sheet that tells you more about the specific COVID-19 vaccine you or your child received. Each approved and authorized COVID-19 vaccine has its own fact sheet that contains information to help you understand the risks and benefits of receiving that specific vaccine. Learn more about [different COVID-19 vaccines](#).
- After getting a COVID-19 vaccine, you or your child should be monitored on site for at least 15 minutes. Learn more about [COVID-19 vaccines and rare severe allergic reactions](#).
- Ask your vaccination provider about getting started with v-safe, a free, smartphone-based tool that uses text messaging and web surveys to provide personalized health check-ins after you receive a COVID-19 vaccination. Parents and guardians can enroll children (ages 5 years and older) or dependents in v-safe and complete health check-ins on their behalf after COVID-19 vaccination. [Register](#) or [sign into](#) v-safe. Learn more about [v-safe](#).



▶ Watch Video: [What to Expect at Your COVID-19 Vaccination Appointment \[00:00:48\]](#)

After Getting a COVID–19 Vaccine

- After getting a COVID-19 vaccine, you or your child should be monitored on site for at least 15 minutes. Learn more about [COVID-19 vaccines and rare severe allergic reactions](#).
- People may experience [side effects](#) after getting a COVID-19 vaccine. Get helpful tips on [how to reduce any pain or discomfort](#).
- Ask your vaccination provider about getting started with v-safe, a free, smartphone-based tool that uses text messaging and web surveys to provide personalized health check-ins after you receive a COVID-19 vaccination. Parents and guardians can enroll children (ages 5 years and older) or dependents in v-safe and complete health check-ins on their behalf after COVID-19 vaccination. [Register](#) or [sign into](#) v-safe. Learn more about [v-safe](#).
- If you are getting a COVID-19 vaccine that requires two doses, be sure to schedule an appointment for [your second shot](#).

▶ Watch Video: [Use v-safe to tell CDC how you're feeling after COVID-19 vaccination \[00:00:34\]](#)

Your CDC COVID–19 Vaccination Card

At the first vaccination appointment, you should get a CDC COVID-19 Vaccination card that tells you what COVID-19 vaccine you or your child received, the date you or your child received it, and where you or your child received it.

- Keep this CDC COVID-19 Vaccination card for future use. Consider taking a picture of the card after your or your child's vaccination appointment as a backup copy.

Learn more about getting a [CDC COVID-19 Vaccination card](#).

Getting Additional Shots

If you received an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine ([Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine](#) or [Moderna COVID-19 vaccine](#)), you need a second shot of the same vaccine to complete the primary series. You should get your second shot even if you have side effects after the first shot, unless a vaccination provider or your doctor tells you [not to get it](#).

It takes time for the body to [build protection after any vaccination](#). Most people are considered [protected](#) 2 weeks after the second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, or the single-dose J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine.

Many people who are [moderately or severely immunocompromised](#) may need an additional third dose to complete their primary vaccine series. Learn more about [COVID-19 vaccines for people who are moderately or severely compromised](#).

Learn about [COVID-19 vaccine booster shots](#).



Booster Shots

Everyone 12 years and older should get a booster after completing their primary series in order to [stay up to date](#) on their COVID-19 vaccines. Booster shots enhance or restore protection against COVID-19 which may have decreased over time. Learn when you are eligible for a [booster](#), or more about [COVID-19 vaccines for people who are moderately to severely immunocompromised](#).

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